



MARSHALL STAR

Serving the Marshall Space Flight Center Community

April 26, 2007

NASA representatives gather at Marshall on April 23-27

By Shelley Miller

The Marshall Center is the host site this week for NASA representatives from Headquarters and field centers who are attending various agencywide and centerwide meetings.

One of the many scheduled events is a Marshall Center all-hands meeting Thursday, April 26, beginning at 10:30 a.m. in Activities Building 4316. NASA Administrator Michael Griffin and Deputy Administrator Shana Dale will join Center Director David King to speak with employees.

Visitors from Headquarters also include Associate Administrator Rex Geveden and Associate Administrator for the Exploration Systems Mission Directorate Scott Horowitz.

A Center Management & Operations meeting kicked off this week with sessions focused on the agency's budgeting and accounting policies and processes. More than 100 agency representatives are at Marshall for the week-long meeting.

Marshall team members supporting the Constellation Program also had an opportunity to hear the latest program update and to ask questions of Griffin, Horowitz, Constellation Program Manager Jeff Hanley and Marshall's Exploration Launch Projects Manager Steve Cook during an informative all-hands meeting.

Two of the agency's three management councils also are part of this week's activities. The Strategic Management

Council, led by Griffin, met to discuss topics related to NASA's strategic direction at the vision and mission level. The Program Management Council, led by Geveden, will gather to focus on program and project performance for achieving NASA's strategic goals and objectives.

This week's events will culminate with the Marshall all-hands meeting. All center employees — civil service and on-site contractors — are encouraged to attend. Employees will have the opportunity to ask questions. Visit "Inside Marshall" for more information and a transportation schedule.

The writer, an ASRI employee, supports the Office of Strategic Analysis and Communications.

An interview with Steve Beale, director of the Office of Procurement

'We touch every organization at the center'

What are the responsibilities of the Office of Procurement?

The role of the Office of Procurement is to acquire products and services that are required to perform the Marshall Center's and NASA's missions. This includes providing acquisition support to all of Marshall's projects offices, directorates and institutional offices. Our office's support for the center includes awarding contracts, cooperative agreements, purchase orders, leases, government orders, and credit card purchases as well as managing the overall administration and oversight. We currently have over 400 active contracts valued at over \$16 billion, and another 900 grants, cooperative agreements and purchase orders valued more than \$1 billion.

A critical part of procurement's responsibilities is to interpret



Doug Steffer/MSFC

Steve Beale has led the Marshall Center's Office of Procurement for nearly 10 years, and served as deputy director for nine years.

See Beale on page 4

College interns spend the summer at Marshall — instead of the beach

By Jessica Wallace

In about a month, Marshall team members can expect to see some new faces around the center.

Beginning May 29, college students from all over the country pursuing technical careers will join the Marshall workforce as interns for 10 weeks to gain professional experience that can't be achieved in the classroom.

The internship programs attract rising college sophomores, juniors, seniors and graduate students, majoring in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, known as STEM, and other technical areas. Some of the internship programs are designed to increase the participation of underserved minorities in science and engineering. Minorities in Science Engineering — or MISE — is one program that draws students from Oakwood College, Alabama A&M University and the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

"We're looking for the best and the brightest, along with diversity," said Marilyn Lewis, a program coordinator with the Academic Affairs Office in the Office of Human Capital. "Our internships are competitive, and we are involved in helping NASA create a workforce that taps into talent across the country."

With the deadline for student applications closed, the Academic Affairs Office is reviewing and evaluating each student for placement in an organization that would best fit his or her abilities and interests. "Once we've completed our reviews, we forward the students' names to the engineers, scientists and other Marshall professionals, who select students that would fit well in their group," said Mona Miller, coordinator of internships. "Mentors often provide research descriptions that help us make a compatible match."

Training NASA's future workforce

The Academic Affairs Office hopes to bring students to Marshall who will someday become NASA's workforce. "Almost everything we do is workforce development, and getting students into programs that have a NASA component helps point them in the direction of science, engineering and mathematics education," said Frank Six, university affairs officer for Marshall. "If we can get them hands-on experience during the summer, it makes them more employable by NASA and aerospace contractors once they graduate."

To reach this goal, Marshall is offering approximately 100 students from around the country the opportunity to learn about the work being done at the Marshall

Center to accomplish NASA's missions.

"This is the opportunity for students to engage in real-world projects," added Miller. "Even though an intern may be assigned to work on a project, there will be periods when he or she may attend meetings or engage in work that may not directly tie in with the current project. That gives students a broader perspective of Marshall and of NASA in general."

Applying classroom knowledge

Marshall provides a learning environment where students can also contribute to NASA's mission. "The interns are actually augmenting the workforce by assisting in research and development," said Madeline Hereford, an education specialist with the Academic Affairs Office. "In past years, some students have co-authored publications. A few have even been associated with patents for work they've performed here."

Besides the NASA experience, students also discover the importance of working as a team. "The internship turns classroom knowledge into competencies," said Six. "In the classroom, you learn, read and absorb. Working at Marshall, you actually have to apply your knowledge. I think for many students it is the first opportunity they've had to do that."

At the end of the program, students come together for a Summer Intern Poster Day in Marshall's Activities Building. Students create posters at the end of their internship that showcase the work they've performed for the center. Marshall team members are invited to attend, ask questions and encourage the interns.

Employees who would benefit by having a college intern assist them during the summer are encouraged to fill out a survey at <http://education.msfc.nasa.gov/survey>.

For more information, contact Mona Miller at 961-7866.

The writer, an ASRI employee and Marshall Star editor, supports the Office of Strategic Analysis and Communications.



Last year, Marshall's college summer interns participated in Summer Intern Poster Day. From left are Tanya Alexander of Spelman College in Atlanta; Brenda Sands of the Engineering Directorate; Manuel Vasquez of the University of Arizona in Tucson, Ariz.; and Pete Rodriguez of the Engineering Directorate.

Sponsored by the Office of the Chief Information Officer

Technology Awareness Campaign offers exhibits — and ice cream

The Office of the Chief Information Officer is sponsoring the annual Technology Awareness Campaign from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wednesday, May 2, in Activities Building 4316. There will be many vendors exhibiting at the event. An ice cream social will begin around 1:30 p.m. All Marshall team members are invited to attend.

The latest information technology products and services available to the Marshall community will be displayed. These include items from high-end personal computers and cellular phones to multifunctional devices, secure Web conferencing applications and collaborative tools for Web services. Microsoft VISTA and Microsoft Office 2007 products also will be shown. Vendor representatives and information technology experts will be on hand to answer questions.

The event also highlights Marshall applications that have been developed in-house and are available to the center, such as the Applications Inventory Module, the Design and Data Management System, and the Integrated Collaborative Environment



Debie Grissom and Chip Dobbs, both of the Office of Center Operations, enjoy ice cream during last year's Technology Awareness Campaign ice cream social.

Program. And for Marshall employees who bring their laptops, representatives will be on hand to discuss and help with backup services, a critical element for protecting and securing data.

NASA revises Employee Performance Communications System based on employee input

By Jessica Wallace

The Employee Performance Communications System — the performance management system for all employees other than Senior Executive Service, Senior Scientific and Technical and Senior Level employees — has been revised based on employee recommendations. The changes will become effective May 1.

Major revisions include moving from a three-level employee performance ratings system to a five-level performance management

system for greater emphasis on results in evaluating performance; requiring supervisors to identify specific organizational goals and objectives relative to employee performance to align with the agency's goals and objectives; and establishing a requirement to ensure that the amount of a monetary performance award is linked to performance ratings.

In addition, supervisors will be required to take the Employee Performance Communications System tutorial using the System Administration, Training and Educational Resources online training, also known as SATERN.

Employees also are strongly encouraged to participate in the tutorials.

For more information on the revisions, benefits and requirements, go to <http://nasapeople.nasa.gov/perform/index.htm>. For questions, call Dana Blaine at 544-7514.

The writer, an ASRI employee and Marshall Star editor, supports the Office of Strategic Analysis and Communications.

Obituaries

Albert V. Harris, 73 of Princeton died April 12. He retired from the Marshall Center in 1975 as an aerospace engineering technician.

Jeffrey L. Campbell, 47, of Huntsville died April 14. He retired from the Marshall Center in 2002 as an engineer.

James T. Felder, 84, of Birmingham died April 17. He retired from the Marshall Center in 1979 as an engineer. He is survived by his wife, Catherine Felder.

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and apply the applicable acquisition laws and regulations and to understand any changes that may occur during the year, which requires a very close working relationship with the Office of the Chief Counsel. Also, a key responsibility that affects our acquisition strategy is the office's role in implementing many socioeconomic programs that afford special opportunities for small businesses. Our organization provides advocacy, counsel and advice to numerous companies of various sizes and classifications.

What are your responsibilities as director?

I provide leadership enabling our team to give effective acquisition and business support that meets or exceeds customer expectations. However, the challenge is to make sure our workforce is appropriately trained. Each contract specialist and procurement analyst is required to complete a specific training course curriculum required for agency certification. We have implemented several initiatives to help each employee, such as offering a formal coaching program, using "focused training" classes taught by our own personnel, and creating checklists and templates to assure that procedures are followed.

A critical responsibility for our office is to provide an acquisition function that operates within the bounds of the laws and regulations, and maintains the highest level of integrity to the public. We are continually under review by outside entities such as the Office of the Inspector General, the General Accounting Office and special review teams from NASA Headquarters. I also want any company interested in doing business with Marshall to believe that the acquisition process here is fair and impartial.

Another area of focus for me is to find ways in which we can improve as an organization and individually. Procurement continually benchmarks other organizations, both within and outside NASA, to understand how we can provide better support to our customers. Our office routinely performs customer surveys to solicit feedback on how we are doing and how we can improve. It is also important for me to use Individual Development Plans for all employees to identify developmental assignments and training needed during the year.

How is the Office of Procurement organized and how does it operate at the Marshall Center?

Procurement is organized to match the overall center organization and have better customer interface with five offices. The offices are the Policy & Information Management Office providing support to all of the Office of Procurement in numerous policy and related functions, small business support, training and data system management; the Engineering Support Office supporting the Engineering Directorate and providing centerwide support for all purchases \$100,000 and below; the Institutional Support Office supporting all center staff offices including the Safety & Mission Assurance Directorate; the Space Transportation Support Office supporting the Shuttle Propulsion Office and the

Exploration Launch Projects Office; and the Science & Space Systems Support Office, which supports the Science & Mission Systems Office. Most of our personnel are co-located with their customers and are distributed among 11 different buildings. Being close to the customer has proven to be valuable in meeting their requirements through daily interaction and building effective relationships. We have found that when we are involved early in the planning process, it provides a higher probability of meeting schedules. It also has been challenging for our managers to be able to provide oversight and effectively communicate when their entire team is not located in one area.



Doug Stoffer/MSFC

Beale says Marshall will award more than \$9 billion in new contracts and contract modifications in 2007. The biggest challenge his office faces in the immediate future is the awarding of the Ares program contracts and restructuring of the space shuttle contracts, he says.

What do you see as your office's greatest strength and biggest contribution to the overall mission?

Our personnel, both civil service and contractor, are procurement's biggest strength. They are the most dedicated and committed people I have ever been around, and each one is critical in supporting our customers. I am very proud of our leadership team that works together very well in difficult circumstances and has exhibited respect and trust for each other. They are committed to doing the best job possible by listening to the customer, being flexible and providing creative ideas, options and possible solutions for the customer.

Since Marshall is very dependent on contractors, the biggest contribution this office can make is to enable our customers to be successful. Whether it is awarding a multi-billion-dollar Ares Upper Stage contract or a purchase order to buy some lab equipment, we touch every organization at the center. Also, a lot of what procurement does is contract administration, which could involve making changes to the contract, evaluating contractor performance, adding funding or negotiating new schedules and cost.

Your office is constantly under pressure with deadlines and many legal and regulatory requirements. How does your organization deal with that work environment?

We experience a variety of expectations from our customers and many different perceptions of our work in the acquisition process.

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There are times when the customer's need for procuring a certain service or product is very challenging. Working in this environment required procurement to co-locate people with the customer to ensure that we are involved in the early planning and communicate what is required in the acquisition process to successfully meet the schedule. Our contracting officers are encouraged to offer alternatives, options and possible solutions when the traditional approach will not meet the requirements.

For a contracting officer to be successful in this environment, that officer must be experienced to the point that they know the regulations and are confident that their decisions will prevail in an external audit or protest. This can be stressful since contracting officers can be criticized and held accountable for their decisions. Our job as a leadership team is to help manage this environment by sharing knowledge and lessons learned, providing encouragement and support, and understanding the areas where more attention and focus is required.

What are the biggest challenges the Office of Procurement faces in the future?

Clearly, the award of the contracts for the Ares program and the restructure of the shuttle contracts are the highest priority. Marshall will award more than \$9 billion in new contracts and contract

modifications during the 2007 calendar year. Two of the acquisitions include major competitions for the Ares Upper Stage production and the Ares Upper Stage instrument unit contracts. Successful completion of all of these items will take a significant amount of effort and innovation by our team and other center personnel. We also have the challenge of providing the support required to complete all of the other ongoing critical acquisition requirements throughout the center while striving to shorten lead times for our customers.

A related challenge is to provide a workforce with the appropriate experience levels required to meet the dynamic needs of the Marshall Center. It is critical that we develop our workforce to be able to handle new requirements and be ready to move up when people retire. Our plan is to accomplish this through disciplined use of developmental and rotational assignments, coaching, training and providing effective tools to the contract specialist.

This fiscal year, a new agencywide electronic tool was implemented called the Contract Management Module. It's an electronic solicitation and contract-writing tool that will be used by all NASA field centers and which, over time, will be an excellent tool. Our office has invested a significant amount of training and time in understanding this new tool and the challenges it presents to our existing large contracts. Making the Contract Management Module work effectively is essential in successfully supporting our customers, and we look forward to making it a major element in reducing lead times and exceeding customer expectations.

Classified Ads

To submit a classified ad to the Marshall Star, go to Inside Marshall, to "Employee Resources," and click on "Employee Ads — Submit Ad." Ads are limited to 15 words, including contact numbers. No sales pitches. Deadline for the next issue is 4:30 p.m. Thursday.

Miscellaneous

John Deere LX176 riding mower, Kawasaki engine, \$300. 527-8116
American Girl doll furniture and accessories, best offer. 348-2670
Set of 15" premium alloy wheels. 506-3236
2004 Jayco Jay Feather Light trailer, 25', sofa s/out, awning, gas grill, spare tire, \$12,900. 852-6983
Yerf-Dog go-kart, single seat, \$900. 828-0815
Two new sheep skins, \$30 each; one reindeer hide, \$80. 539-1316
Oak sleigh bed, twin-XL, new mattress, drawer under bed for storage or twin mattress, \$300. 679-2951
Craftsman air compressor, 5HP, 115VAC, \$75. 509-3559
Two tickets to Elton John, Birmingham, May 5, Floor, Section A, seats 11-12, \$210. 990-2280
Horses for sale. 728-5768 after 5 p.m.
Boy's bedroom furniture: bed, dresser, end table, \$150. 830-6477/No calls after 8 p.m.

Utility trailer, wood floor, 5'x8', ramp/gate, 2" hitch, \$400. 721-1234 after 5 p.m.
Green leaf Japanese Maple trees, \$25 each. 345-7049
Springer Spaniel pups, 10 weeks old, 2 males, AKC registered, \$250. 890-0401 after 6 p.m.
Two "comic book/magazine/book" wooden 2-tier display racks, disassembled, 5'Hx3'Wx2'D, \$12. 971-0499
Thirty-seven paving stones, rust red in color, 12"x12"x2", \$15. 348-9381
Oak corner entertainment center, 6' w/doors, multiple shelves, \$300. 503-6773
Longaberger Housekeeper basket w/liner and protector, \$300. 509-2536
Thick foam futon, dark green, \$125; solid cherry computer armoire, 3 years old, \$300. 658-5684
Gold slide bracelet, unusual center, \$1,750. 777-2374
Craftsman table saw and stand, 1960's vintage, very heavy, needs ac cord. 851-9418
Aluminum scuba tank, 80 cf @ 3000 psi, 1 year old, \$90. 227-1327
Audiovox SH9 home dock for XM satellite radio, new, in original packaging, \$25. 337-1353
Custom built smoker, 250-gallon tank, on 14' trailer, two wooden storage boxes, \$2,500. 520-2327
Swedish Memory foam mattresses, new queen size, \$425. 996-5617
Three swivel light oak arrow-back bar stools, 24" seat height, \$150. 830-0248/Monrovia
Coffee table, 38x38, glass top w/beveled edges, walnut base w/ball & claw legs, \$175. 746-0046
Two Little Tikes basketball goals, \$15 for both. 325-2919
Two Ambassador 5500 C3 bait casting reels, \$35 each. 883-1003
Windows XP Home edition upgrade w/service pack 2, local retail purchase, new sealed box, \$47.50. 683-7683

Vehicles

1997 Honda Accord special edition, 4 door, gold, sunroof, 128k miles, \$3,900. 679-0485
1994 BMW 325is, 178K miles, 5 speed, a/c, black, power locks/windows, remote entry, \$4,800. 651-8355
2004 Dodge Ram 1500, short wheel base, Hemi engine, \$13,700; Kid's chopper bicycle, \$75. 468-9377
2002 Toyota Camry SE, automatic, power seats, new tires, CD/cassette, tinted windows, 90K miles, \$10,900. 256-6533
2002 Kia Sedona, \$7,000. 233-6197
2001 Volvo S40, 4 door, sedan, blackberry, 1.9, 4-cyl., turbo, AM/FM cassette/CD, \$4,500. 468-6016
2000 GMC Sonoma, 4x4, 87K miles, off road and loaded, \$10,000. 931-967-7307
1997 Harley Sportster 1200, black, extra seats and pipes. 728-5768 after 5 p.m.
2000 Nissan Frontier Crew Cab, automatic, silver, new tires and battery, power options, \$9,600. 880-9025
2004 Nissan Quest SE minivan includes towing package, DVD entertainment system, 95K miles, \$15,000. 520-6950
1994 Ford Econoline van, white, TV/VCR, towing package, 175K miles, \$3,500. 830-9507 after 5 p.m.
2001 Yamaha V-star 1100 Custom, Cobra pipes, windshield, stainless steel cruising bar, 13.8k miles, \$4,300. 694-0173
1999 Mazda Miata, blue, 42K miles, 5 speed, leather, all power, \$9,000. 205-332-9298
1981 Kawasaki kz650 for parts, \$50. 468-1183

Wanted

Players for senior softball, 2 leagues, ages 55 and up. 883-1135/Fred Garcia

Free

Male dog, 1 year old, short haired, mixed breed, neutered, 30 lbs., free to good home. 881-7283

Marshall celebrates Earth Day on April 17



Doug Staffer/MSFC

Marshall Center employees celebrated Earth Day on April 17. The theme of this year's event, sponsored by Marshall's Environmental Excellence Team, was "Earth Day Every Day." Following the opening ceremony, Marshall

Center Director David King, left, Huntsville Mayor Loretta Spencer and Madison Mayor Sandy Kirkindall performed the ceremonial tree planting on the grounds of Activities Building 4316.

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